Human Documents of Married Life

By Virginia T. Van de Water

Intimate and Human, Intensely Alive, Each Story Presenting a Problem Which Might Occur to Any One of Us at Any Time

WHY I LEFT MY WIFE

I can say truthfully that Doris and I loved each other when we married. Heaven knows there was no need for either of us to marry if we did not want to. Doris could have had any one of several eligibles whom she kept dangling after her—never quite refusing a man until he insisted upon her taking him or leaving him; while I was very well satisfied with my life as a bachelor physician with enough money to keep me comfortable until I made a success of my practice. And, as to him that hath is usually given, so, as I was not dependent for bread and butter upon the practise of medicine, I was soon earning enough from my profession to put jam on my bread and to buy the "gilt-edged" quality of butter. To drop the metaphor, I had a handsomely furnished office, and lived with my mother. I spent many evenings at my club, and had a goodly number of friends. Altogether, my life was a comfortable one in every way—until I fell in love. Then I thought I could never be happy until Doris married me. Perhaps I would not have been. Who knows?

I do not mean to be frivolous; but to contemplating the follies in one's life one must laugh—or curse.

All married people have their little squabbles, their little differences of opinion, I suppose, and I regarded the arguments and disputes that my wife and I had as part and parcel of every wedded life. For the first year or two we were very well satisfied with each other, and with our new surroundings.

As a physician I had, of course, a right and a duty to keep professional business to myself, but as I did not mention this fact to Doris until an issue was raised, she did not know how much or how little I told her of my private affairs. When we had been married about eighteen months, however, I had occasion to express my views upon the subject. A patient sent me a letter which came when I was out. This patient chanced also to be a friend of my wife, and when Doris saw her hand-writing on the envelope she jumped to the conclusion that the writer had made a mistake and that the letter was meant for her. So she opened it. In doing this she did not tear the envelope, as the flap did not adhere tightly, and came unfastened easily, without marring the paper. When Doris had read the letter, which was a request that I call, professionally, the following evening, she simply touched the envelope-flap with a drop of mucilage, and closed it, putting the letter with other mail on my office table. Naturally I did not mention the matter of her friend's indisposition to Doris. In fact, I knew that the patient was averse to having anyone know of it. So when, at dinner the next evening, Doris remarked, "I suppose you are going over to the Clarksons' tonight?" I started slightly, then recovered myself.

"Ah! Mrs. Clarkson told you she had sent for me, did she?" I commented.

My wife smiled and said nothing. Later when I referred to the matter in talking to Mrs. Clarkson, saying that, of course, I had not felt at liberty to mention her illness to my wife until I learned that she had heard of it from the patient herself, I was informed that I was mistaken, and that nobody but the patient and her husband knew that she was not perfectly well.

Suspecting that my wife had opened my mail, I reproached her with having done so. She reminded me that, not knowing I was the Clarksons' physician, it was quite natural that she should have made the mistake thinking that the letter addressed in her friend's handwriting was meant for her, and that the "Dr." on the envelope had been written in error.

"Why didn't you tell me what you had done?" I demanded sharply.

She tossed her head. "Well, if you must know, because I was afraid you would scold—as you are doing now. You see, I was right in my fears."

A week later I chanced to see lying at my wife's plate one morning a letter addressed to her in the handwriting of a man whom I knew, and who was an occasional caller at our home. I supposed that when Doris came down to breakfast she would explain the letter to me. Instead, she opened it, glanced over it, refolded it, returned it to its envelope, and opened and read the rest of her correspondence. As I was leaving the house, she remarked carelessly:

"Shall you be at home to luncheon?"

I replied that I expected to be.

"Why?" I asked.

"Katie will take care of you," she informed me, "for I shall not be in."

"Ah!" I said, "I did not know that you had anything on hand for this morning."

"I am lunching down-town with a friend," she replied briefly.

The next day one of my patients mentioned, carelessly and innocently, that she had seen my "pretty wife lunching with Mr. Moore yesterday." I did not betray my surprise, but when I reached home I asked Doris why she had gone to luncheon with a man without asking my permission. She looked at me with a triumphant half-smile.

"And do you ask my permission before you make appointments with women?" she queried sarcastically.

I strove to speak calmly. "Do try to be sensible, Doris! You know that professional engagements are very different from social affairs."

I did not ask her not to go to luncheon again with men, for I was sure that if I did she would go when she chose, only would say nothing to me about it.

My wife and my mother were never intimate. I am sure that my mother tried to think of Doris as a daughter, but they had little in common, except their love for me—and that is not often a bond of union between a man's wife and his mother.

Of course I went to see my mother whenever I could, and soon I learned not to mention many of these calls, for Doris had a nagging way of objecting to them. Each afternoon, after my round visits, as I returned toward home, I would glance at my watch as I neared my mother's house, and if I had time I would run in and chat for a while. A week after the conversation just recorded I was warming my chilled hands at my mother's cheery grate-fire when the telephone in her hall rang sharply. I was wanted on the wire.

It was my wife who was speaking. She had reached home ten minutes before, expecting to find me there, as my office hours had already begun. The maid had told her that I had been called up three times by one person, as I was wanted on an urgent case.

"It just occurred to me," added Doris, "that perhaps you were at your mother's, although I could hardly believe it, as you called there only yesterday afternoon."

Perhaps the fact that the telephone was between us made it easier for me to say, "I am here many afternoons."

That evening, over our coffee, she remarked:

"Tom, I wish you would pay more attention to business."

I looked my amazement.

"Yes," she continued, "I do! This afternoon you might have missed a good big consultation fee just by stopping to see your mother."

"There are some things I care more for than money," I remarked illogically.

"I know it!" she exclaimed. "And I think it's pretty hard on me that you do not earn all the money that you might. Don't you suppose that I would like to have the things that rich doctor's wives have?"

I set down my cup and gazed at her incredulously.

"Oh, yes," she went on, "I mean what I say! You think just because I don't speak of such things that I never wish I had a motor car, and trained servants, and a private house, and lots of handsome clothes! I tell you, Tom, those are the things that make life worth while."

"And is not your life worth while?" I asked.

"Of course you think it is because I am married to you!" she burst forth. "But what have I? An apartment, when I want a house; two servants, when I want a half-dozen—as other women have; a trolley car or a taxicab to ride in, when I want my own motor; one new dress where I really need a half-dozen!"

"Perhaps," I said coldly, "you may some day have all these things, but it will not be until I am an older man. If you loved me you would be willing to wait and be patient."

I pushed my chair back and left the table. I simply did not dare remain longer in the room with my wife. My temper is quick and hot, and the only way in which I can control it is to get away alone with it. I had had time to become calm when, an hour later, Doris opened the door of the library where I sat reading.

"Dear Tom," she said softly, "I was very horrid, and cross, and piggy tonight, and I am sorry. Won't you please forgive me? For I love you, Tom, and even if you were as poor as —a newspaper man"—with a gurgling laugh—"I would love you just as much as I do now."

I gathered her into my arms and kissed her.

She perched contentedly on my knee and talked, running her fingers through my hair. "Really, Tom, I think one thing that makes me so horrid and fretful is because I am worried. I need some new clothes dreadfully."

"Many of them?" I asked, remembering sundry obligations I must meet the first of the month.

"Well, several," she laughed. "And now that I am trying to be good I think I ought to make a confession to you, Tom."

"Go ahead!" I said.

"Well, I really need a new street-dress and a reception-gown, and, besides that, an evening gown, but I did not want to bother you about all this when you have so much on your mind, so I just ordered one of them—the reception-gown—without saying anything to you about it. It is made so handsomely that it will do for an evening gown, too, except upon very swell occasions. And, Tom, it is really a beauty!"

"Well, dear," I said gently, "your old husband is not so poor that he can't pay for a really pretty dress for you, especially when you have come to him of your own accord and 'fessed up' your extravagance."

The above episode was still fresh in my mind when, a few evenings later, as I was starting out to attend a dinner of my medical club, I knocked at the door of my wife's room to bid her good-by. Before she could reply I turned the knob and entered. She stood, fully dressed, before her long mirror, surveying herself approvingly. She wore a costume which I had never seen before, a gorgeous affair, cut low in the neck, and with filmy lace veiling the upper part of her shapely arms.

"My new reception-gown, the one I told you of," she said in reply to my inquiring look.

"Oh, are you going out this evening?" I asked, in surprise.

"No. I've invited a friend to dinner," she replied hastily, as she hurried from the room to give her maid some forgotten directions. She was gone before I could ask for further particulars, and she lingered so long in the kitchen or dining room that I could not wait until her return without being late for my engagement. As I stepped from the elevator of our apartment house I came face to face with Richard Clarkson, the husband of the patient whom I have already mentioned. A vague wonder crossed my mind as I nodded to him as to whom he was going to visit in our building. He wore, I also noted, his evening clothes. Then the matter passed from my mind.

Nor did I think of it again until I stepped into my wife's room when I came home at twelve o'clock that night. She lay in bed, propped among her pillows; the electric bulb above her threw a strong light upon the French novel she was reading and upon her unnaturally flushed face. She had been eating marrons glaces from a huge box of these sweetmeats that stood on the table by her bed. Glancing at them, I remembered that they cost a dollar and a half a pound, and noted that the box before me must hold easily four pounds.

"Who has been spreading chestnuts at your feet in lieu of roses?" I asked teasingly, thinking, first of all, of one or two women friends who had an abundance of money and were fond of humoring my wife's love for sweets.

"Oh, a friend of mine," she said lightly, and straightway began asking me about what kind of an evening I had had, who was at the dinner, etc. It was not until I rose from the easy chair into which I had thrown myself that it occurred to me to inquire.

"By the way, who dined with you tonight?"

For a moment she hesitated, then made an effort and said frankly, "Mr. Clarkson."

"Clarkson!" I gasped.

"Pray, why not?" asked my wife defiantly.

"But how does he happen to dine with you, and how do you happen to let him, a married man, dine alone with you?"

Her face hardened. "And how," she asked, imitating my manner, "do you happen to dine with Mrs. Clarkson, and how does she, a married woman, happen to let you dine alone with her?"

"Don't be a fool!" I exclaimed. "I should think that even you, with your shallow comprehension, would see, when I have explained it to you dozens of times, that there is a difference between a physician accepting an invitation to remain to dinner at a house at which he is calling and his wife deliberately asking a married man to dine with her when she knows her husband is going to be out until nearly midnight! Did he bring you these bonbons?" I asked suspiciously, as my eyes rested for a moment on the box beside her.

"Yes."

I stood looking down at her. The white light over her bed showed me that, although when angry or frightened Doris usually became pale, the vivid rose in her cheks had not faded. Before she could suspect my intention I turned quickly to her dressing table, poured some violet toilet water upon my handkerchief, and, as quickly, bent over my wife and wiped her cheek with it. The handkerchief was stained with pink. I showed it to her and sneered:

"Painting, eh? I suppose that the complexion you wear for your husband is not quite strong and vivid enough for one of your men friends? How long since you adopted the 'making-up' business?"

She sat up in bed, her eyes flashing. "You are rude and unjust!" she exclaimed. "How long is it since you qualified as a censor of morals?"

My anger left me as suddenly as it had come. I sat on the side of the bed and tried to make the excited woman listen to reason. "Child," I said, "are you miserable, really, or are you only angry when you say these things? I want you to be happy, and I do not want to be hard upon you." I saw that she was listening, and I continued: "I give you all that I can afford to give you. I wish I could let you have everything that money can buy; but, you see, I am not a rich man."

"There are other things that money won't buy that you might give me, and don't!" she exclaimed.

"What do you mean?"

"That you can always find time to go to your medical club, and to see your mother, and to go here, there, and everywhere, while I must amuse myself. You know as well as I do that I want you to make as many calls as you can, for they mean business. But there are lots of other places you go, and, I warrant, have a good time, too, while I can stay at home, and then get scolded if I have a nice man friend here to dinner."

It was useless to try to make her understand.

All during that winter Mrs. Clarkson suffered with a nervous trouble that made it necessary for her to consult me often. One of the exciting causes of her condition, I shrewdly suspected, was the fact that she and her husband were growing steadily apart. Perhaps he did not understand a woman of her sensitive nature, perhaps her mercurial temperament irritated him, for he was calm and unimaginative. All doctors know his type—the well, strong, robust man who is angered by tears and exasperated by a woman's nervous fancies. Once or twice I had attempted to make him see that his wife's health was in danger, but as long as she was up and about he attributed her depression and excitability to "whims." When her nervous attacks would threaten her, the sufferer would send for me to give her some quieting prescription or to reason her out of the "horrors" that were symptomatic of her nervous condition. She was very young, and I was heartily sorry for her. She had no relative in our large city, and was too proud to take ordinary friends into her confidence. Some one—possibly Clarkson himself—mentioned to my wife that this one of my patients was very dependent upon me. Of course Doris spoke to me of it.

"To my way of thinking," she said, "a popular young physician should be very careful not to get himself talked about."

"If people are looking for evil they will find it everywhere," I affirmed. "And the physician in the discharge

SHE HAD TURNED THE KNOB NOISELESSLY AND ENTERED

of his duties should be above the fear of such gossip."

Her lips quivered, and, seeing that she was unhappy, I explained to her the situation as dispassionately and fully as I could.

"You know, Doris," I assured her, "that I am always, and everywhere, faithful to you."

That she doubted me to the extent of watching me was proved one day when I came suddenly upon her reading a letter which I had left, inadvertently, upon the hall table. She started and tried to conceal her action.

"What are you doing?" I demanded.

"I found this letter here, on the hall table, instead of on your desk where you usually leave your mail, and I though you had left it here for me to read, but as soon as I began it I saw my mistake, and did not read more than the first line," she said, avoiding my eyes.

I knew that she lied, but a man does not tell his wife a truth of that kind—unless he is very angry.

When I was alone, I glanced again over the letter. It was from Mrs. Clarkson, saying that she was worried about a matter that concerned her closely, and would call at my office at six o'clock that evening.

By the time she came the fact that Doris must know of the appointment had slipped from my mind, but away down in my inner consciousness was a feeling of resentment that she had read my letter. Man is a complex being, and it may be that the contrast between her scheming and uncandid ways and the frank, open manner of my patient made me especially gentle to the latter when she called. She had come to confide to me that she felt she must get away from town for a while, and to ask me to suggest to her a quiet resort. We talked the matter over, and she had risen to leave when she said:

"I hate to go on a journey alone, yet my husband has not the time to accompany me, even if he wanted to. Then, too, he thinks me so silly, as I suppose I am. He can't comprehend why I have such foolish notions, and I try to control them; but, oh, I get so frightened!"

"Poor child!" I said, "you poor girl!"

She dropped her head on my shoulder with a sob. She seemed so young and so helpless that, instinctively, I laid my hand on her bowed head.

"I know it is hard, dear," I whispered. "I know all about it."

"Yes," she sobbed. "Thank God you do! If I go away, how shall I get on without you!"

A rustle at the door made me look up. My wife stood there. She had turned the knob noiselessly and entered the room. Before I could speak she was gone.

When the last patient for that evening had left my office my wife asked me if she might see me alone. Her manner was cold, her eyes hard. She sat down in my desk chair, and I stood in front of her. I was angry; so was she. I waited for her to speak.

"Tom," she began, "I wish to say to you that you will have to carry on—affairs—such as you have with Mrs. Clarkson somewhere else than in your own home. You know that I saw what took place this evening."

I held my temper in check, as I asked, "Do you think that scene requires an explanation?"

"No! Anyone can understand a scene like that, unless he has a purer mind than most people."

"Than you have, you mean?" I asked bitterly.

She flushed hotly, but went on, "As long as I am your wife I will not be insulted by having these things happen where the servants may come in upon them."

I tried to speak calmly. "You are laboring under a misapprehension, Doris. On my own account I care nothing, but for the sake of a good woman I wish you to understand—"

She interrupted me, springing to her feet and confronting me. "I tell you I understand it well enough!" she exclaimed. "When a woman has her head on a married man's shoulder, and is wondering how she 'can get on without him,' it can have but one meaning. And I will not stand it. Oh, I am no fool! I know what such scenes mean!"

I clenched my hands to keep from touching her. Even in my rage I remembered that she was a woman, and my wife. "You ought to know what such scenes mean!" I retorted. "Since you make demands, so shall I. I have made them before, however, without enforcing them. Now I repeat that you are to accept no more favors from Jack Moore. Do you hear? Don't you suppose your maids gossip about that affair? Don't you suppose that one or the other of them saw, as I did, his card lying on your dressing-table with the box that had contained the orchids he sent you? Moreover—listen to me!—Moore has a reputation that ought to keep a decent woman from wanting to speak to him, much less accept his favors."

She looked at me for a moment, wide eyed, then burst into tears. "That is the way with you men!" she exclaimed. "You can do as you please! But we women must not take a step outside of the narrow path you, our owners, mark out for us! I won't believe anything against Jack Moore. He is my friend, and I like him. You are jealous, that's all!"

"You have heard what I said!" I warned her. "See that you do as I tell you in this matter!"

"I'll do as I like!" she flashed out vehemently. "You do!"

"For God's sake," I exclaimed "shut up!"

She caught her breath and gazed at me aghast.

"Yes!" I went on, my voice breaking curi..., in spite of all my efforts to steady it. "I mean it! Are you trying to drive me insane? I tell you I can't stand much more of this damnable nagging! And I won't stand it!"

Again she gasped, but I continued: "Listen to me! You misunderstood entirely and, I believe, wilfully the scene between Mrs. Clarkson and me. If you hadn't been dishonorable enough to read my letter you wouldn't have been here eavesdropping. But since you were, I have the right to tell you that I don't lie to you and that I'm innocent. I declare it on my honor! You can believe it or not, as you like!"

She was standing near the door, watching me, startled, but, at these words, she threw back her head and laughed harshly. "As you make the assertion on your honor, I do not believe it!" And she was gone.

I slammed the door behind her, locked it, buried my face in my hands and, to my own horror, burst into hysterical sobs.

I had expected to go to my club that evening, and had told my wife so earlier in the day, adding that I would not get home before midnight. After the scene through which I had just passed I was too much shaken, my nerves were too raw, for me to want to chat with a crowd of men, and I went instead to spend a couple of quiet, restful hours with my mother. I told her nothing of what had happened, but her very presence calmed me. Leaving her at ten o'clock, I came home and let myself into the apartment noiselessly, supposing that Doris had gone to her room and, possibly, to sleep. With no other thought in mind, I pushed open the door of a little room which we called "the den." As I entered, I saw that the room was lighted only by the glow from the grate-fire. At right angles to the fireplace was a couch heaped with cushions. Seated on this, leaning back among the cushions, was my wife. She wore a new evening gown, and, even in that moment, I remembered with a sensation akin to ironical amusement that only today I had sent her dressmaker a check for it. Bending over her, and gazing down at her, was Jack Moore. His hand held hers, and she smiled up into his face. The look in his eyes made me want to kill him. I stepped forward and touched an electric button, flooding the room with light. In a glance, I saw on the table by the couch two glasses, siphon, and a bottle half full of Scotch whiskey. Before I could collect my wits, Moore laughed lightly.

"I was just saying good night to this fair lady," he said, relinquishing the hand he pretended to have been shaking. "And now I bid you good night, doctor."

Ignoring his outstretched hand, I strode to the door and flung it wide open, pointing to it with a quivering finger. "Get out of here, you cur!" I exclaimed.

He justified my use of the epithet by obeying silently, and so quickly that in less than thirty seconds I heard the front door close behind him.

Without a word I caught my wife by the arm and dragged her to her feet. As I did so I felt my fingers sink into her flesh. I saw her wince, and I was glad. She gazed at me as if fascinated. I heard myself speaking as though I were another man—all the while holding her firm, cool arm. I told her that this was the end of things between us; that I could no longer endure her and her lies; that she could go her way and I mine; that I would support her, but I would never live with her again—never! She made no protest, only stood there and looked at me with a half-sneer on her lips.

"What have you got to say?" I asked her at last, in a hoarse voice which I scarcely recognized as my own. I let go of her arm and waited for her to speak. She must answer me, I thought, but she was silent.

"What have you got to say?" I repeated, more loudly. Once more I heard my voice rise to a querulous falsetto. My teeth chattered as though I had a hard chill. I gripped my wife by both shoulders, seizing her so tightly that I thought she must cry out that I was hurting her. I hoped she would, as I felt my fingers sink again into her flesh. But this time she did not wince. She looked me straight in the eyes, and her reply slowly and distinctly.

"That you are a cad, and I hate you!" she hissed.

My hands dropped. I saw on her bare shoulders the prints of my strong fingers and the livid dents my nails had made. I watched the finger-marks as they changed from white to angry crimson.

Then I went out of the house, and left her standing there.

Three months after my wife and I had parted, I chanced one Sunday noon to be passing the fashionable church of which Doris had been a member before our marriage. A throng of people were pouring out after the morning service. A whim seized me to enter. Of late years I had attended church but seldom. I remembered that after the service just ended there would be the celebration of the communion, to which only a small part of the congregation would remain. Entering, I went into a pew in a shadowed corner and listened to the service, until, looking up suddenly, I saw Doris passing up the aisle toward the chancel. A wave of regret, compunction and compassion swept over me—a desire to be at peace with her—and, obeying an inexplicable impulse, I followed her up the aisle. As she knelt at the altar-rail, I knelt down beside her. As I did so, she raised her bowed head and glanced at me, then quietly arose, walked down the aisle, and out of the church. Kneeling there, dazed, I remembered that it was at this altar we had been married.

BLAME THE CLIMATE

Why They Gamble Down in Old Mexico.

Local "Feria," When Every Gambler Lets Instincts Revel and Plays His Favorite Game—Quick Changes in a Day.

Gambling, which is as old as the pyramids and as young as Broadway, is one of the chief features of life in present-day Mexico, the New York Evening Telegram remarks.

And the philosophy of gambling among our southern neighbors beyond the Rio Grande is given by Henry Baerlein in his "Mexico, the Land of Unrest."

"And now we come to the philosophy of all this matter," writes Mr. Baerlein. One may argue that there is none, and that people gamble in the Mexican republic for the same reasons as they gamble elsewhere.

"But, according to a certain school, the Mexicans demand consideration that is quite peculiar.

"They are given, so 'tis said, to gambling on account of imperfections in their agricultural economy. Wide stretches of the land are always rushing from one extreme into the other, from extreme fertility to unproductiveness.

"In four and twenty hours the people pass from wealth to misery. Their wheat is all destroyed, their flocks are dying, and underneath the wheel of fortune they are helpless if it does not take another turn, which consummation is not to be brought about except by gambling.

"Mexico is vast, and on the one hand there are tracts of country which unroll a savage fruitfulness—such as the part of Coahuila where it is sufficient for the cotton to be planted once in ten years, and the district near to Irapuato where, a mile or more above the sea, one has throughout the year crop after crop of strawberries; and so the jungle, round a rubber clearing, where the tentacles of the vegetation try to choke all human effort, and if they are cut will grow again, and at the rate of half an inch a day.

"Then, on the other hand, we have the desert places where the summer's heat or ghastly whirlwinds or the dust goes dancing, but where cactus grows and nothing else.

"In either sort of territory you know what is to be expected; it will surely happen, but a great deal of the land is subject to the vacillations we have mentioned. And the causes are less difficult to find than to prevent. . . .

"What a country! Portions of it change so little that we have the tale of a Chicago woman who came down to live in this eternal spring, and as the mercury of the barometer did not so much as tremble she was certain that the instrument was out of order, and she broke it!

"In those other regions that we have described a laborer would formerly have chosen one of three professions—brigandage, rebellion, gambling.

"Now the former has been more or less blotted out by the rurales, rebellion does not always offer the antique inducements, and the disappointed laborer falls back on gambling. He is not restricted to the lottery.

"There is said to be a time for all things, and in Mexico it is the local feria (the fair) when every gambler is supposed to let his instincts revel. He can start to play soon after sunrise, and if he should be unfortunate, can visit, now and then, the image in whose honor all the festival is being held.

"Monte, roulette and lotto are the chief games. It is curious to see a circle of adults, thought of the poorer classes, solemnly seated at their lotto cards and wait until the fish or bird is called. . . .

"There is a demand for fighting cocks. . . . The cock fight in itself is unattractive, being but a matter of some seconds. As the one bird flies across the other he brings into play the fearful spur that has been fastened to his leg. A mass of feathers tumbles down and many pesos change their owner."

Peru the Source of Cocaine.

There is a shrub in high Peru which does not bring the blessing of the potato—I mean the coca tree, whence comes cocaine. The leaf is chewed by young and old. Some doctors say it is very bad for the people of Peru. The infantile death rate is high. And they say few old persons are to be found. Other doctors aver that the coca leaf is very good for the peasants. I am inclined to take a view between the two opinions. I met a man in Cuzco who was running a grocery store, and Professor Giessecke told me they had very good proofs in that town that he was a hundred and fifty years old. He sold me chocolate and also coca leaves. I chewed the leaves to try to cure an ulcer in my stomach, and they helped me more than all the medicines of civilization that I had tried.—National Magazine.

Ups and Downs.

"He proposed to her on one of the Alpine peaks and she threw him down."

"Think of that!"

"But he pulled himself together and asked her again."

"What happened then?"

"She took him up."

"Well! Well!"

"They've been married a year now and he's more cast down than ever."

Chinese Maze of Canals.

The canal system in China is the most extensive in the world, with the exception of Holland. Wherever the lay of the land permits the Chinese have made a canal. Thus they are enabled to carry the products of their labor to market at a minimum expense.

The Bell.

The telephone girl sure looks swell,
But she's no bells, I hold;
For I know well that any bell
Will ring as it is tolled.

Back to the Land.

In New York certain persons who have purchased 1,000 acres of land in New Jersey, have formed the "American Agricultural association," to encourage and produce a "back to the land" movement. The 1,000 acres will be subdivided into five-acre parcels, on each of which will be built a house and a barn and on which a well will be bored. These little ready-made farms will then be sold practically at cost. Purchasers will be urged to enter truck and chicken farming to supply the New York market. Fine idea, isn't it? But does it take account of all the needs? That is, has it been demonstrated that the five-acre farm can in the majority of cases be made to pay? Or is the unit of land too small by 50 per cent? And does the farmer need some practical experience or can he just jump in and win right off the bat, so to say?

Automobile Spreads Pests.

Strangely enough, the automobile has proved an ally of the moth. Not only does it stir up currents of air which scatter the fallen and infected foliage, but it actually carries insects many miles into districts which have hitherto been immune. On one occasion some years ago there is every reason to believe that a deliberate attempt was made to spread the pest. Eggs said to have been found in California were sent to the department of agriculture for examination and for a time it seemed certain that in some unaccountable way the pest had traveled across the entire continent. Investigation revealed the fact, however, that the man who forwarded the eggs had previously been employed in fighting the moth in Massachusetts. Upon the arrival of a scientist attached to the department, he left his home and remained without address until the investigator had departed. There were no further reports of the gipsy moth in California.

Painting "Old Hickory."

No American can stand before the portrait of Andrew Jackson by Thomas Sully and look upon that tall and wiry frame without feeling that here is presented at a glance the strength and vigor of "Old Hickory." The portrait is very familiar, owing to many reproductions, but the visitor is generally surprised to discover that Jackson had blue eyes and sandy hair. His voice and action had a peculiarly martial air to one English writer, who further said that he seemed to be a "human gamecock." Yet he could also see a lofty ideal of honor in the deep eyes overhung by bushy gray eyebrows, the ridgy lines of the cheeks and forehead, and the white hair obstinately brushed back. Jackson was a popular subject, as was also Chief Justice Marshall, and again John Randolph of Roanoke, strong and rugged in character, in which the artist tried to find trace of his ancestress, Pocahontas.—National Magazine.

Many a man is like an ostrich. By closing his eyes to his own faults he imagines that other people are equally blind.